



*1400 members in 12 shoreline and surrounding towns  
safeguarding fundamental human rights through grassroots action*

### **Testimony in Support of H.B. 6616**

#### **An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status**

Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible (CTSI) is a non-partisan grass roots organization and a member of the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance. Our mission includes a strong commitment to creating a more just society by addressing systemic injustice and racism. To that end, our Immigration & Refugee Action Team defends the human and civil rights of immigrants in a broad spectrum of contexts, which ranges from supporting specific families threatened by deportation to promoting laws that embody equitable principles and policies.

One of the most fundamental human rights is the right to health care. However, people who are undocumented do not have the options to enroll in, or purchase, healthcare insurance that are available to everyone else. In the last two years, the state of Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY to children ages 0-12 years. We strongly support passage of H.B. 6616 to expand access to age 26. However, we urge you to expand HUSKY access to the entire immigrant community regardless of immigration status or age. Healthy children need healthy parents if they are to thrive. It is shameful that after a lengthy pandemic, Connecticut has not yet taken this step. Many undocumented workers kept our state going when the pandemic was at its worst. As essential workers, they risked their lives and the health of their families.

We ask you to imagine what it would be like if you or a loved one were in the midst of a medical emergency and had to consider whether you would be able to pay for the cost of medical services. Or, if you needed medication to slow the progression of a chronic condition but you couldn't afford to buy it. Or, if you delayed care for a seemingly minor infection, but because you put off seeing a doctor, the infection became systemic and life-threatening. These are the kind of dilemmas and heartbreak that undocumented immigrants face every day when making decisions about health care. Over the past few years, many health care providers have repeatedly described the dire consequences of foregoing healthcare, which not only results in acute crises and death but also creates and exacerbates chronic health conditions, as well as severely impacting families' financial well-being.

Besides the compelling humanitarian and practical reasons why this bill should be enacted into law, it is grossly unfair that a community that pays millions of dollars in state and local taxes each year, some of which are allocated to fund HUSKY, does not have the same rights as other taxpayers. (According to the [American Immigration Council](#), "Undocumented immigrants in Connecticut paid an estimated \$335.4 million in federal taxes and \$197.4 million in state and local taxes in 2018.") People who contribute so much to our state welfare should not be discriminated against because of their immigration status.

We strongly urge the Committee not only to support H.B. 6616 but also to expand access to HUSKY to the whole immigrant community.

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